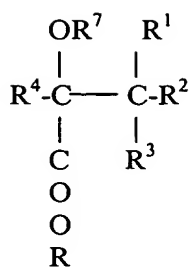


## CLAIMS

1. An aqueous composition comprising (i) a fluorochemical compound and (ii) an ester derivative of an alpha-hydroxy acid, said ester derivative having a melting point of not more than 35°C and a water solubility of not more than 10% by weight at 25°C.  
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2. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative has a boiling point at 1 atm of at least 150°C.  
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3. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said fluorochemical compound is comprised in said aqueous composition in an amount of up to 30% by weight and said ester derivative in an amount of 0.1 to 20% by weight.  
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4. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative is an aliphatic ester.
5. An aqueous composition according to claim 4 wherein said ester derivative is an ester of an alpha-hydroxy acid having at least two acid groups and wherein each of the acid groups has been esterified with an alcohol and wherein the total number of carbon atoms in the alcohol derived portion of the ester groups is at least 4.  
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6. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein the alpha-hydroxy group of said alpha-hydroxy acid has been esterified.  
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7. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative corresponds to the formula:



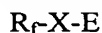
(I)

wherein each of R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> independently represents H, OH, a hydrocarbon group or COOR<sup>5</sup> with R<sup>5</sup> representing a hydrocarbon group; R<sup>4</sup> represents H, a hydrocarbon group or -CH<sub>2</sub>-COOR<sup>6</sup> wherein R<sup>6</sup> represents a hydrocarbon group; R represents a hydrocarbon group; and R<sup>7</sup> represents H or an acyl group.

8. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said ester derivative is selected from the group consisting of citrates, malates and tartarates.

9. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said fluorochemical compound is selected from the group consisting of a polymer derived from a polymerization of a fluorinated acrylate or methacrylate monomer, a compound derived from a condensation of an isocyanate compound and a fluorinated compound having one or more isocyanate reactive groups and a compound derived from a condensation of a fluorinated isocyanate compound and one or more isocyanate reactive compounds.

10. An aqueous composition according to claim 1 wherein said fluorochemical compound comprises a polymer derived from a polymerization of (i) a fluorinated monomer according to the formula:



wherein R<sub>f</sub> represents a perfluorinated aliphatic group, X represents an organic linking group and E represents an ethylenically unsaturated group and (ii) a non-fluorinated compound.

11. An aqueous composition according to claim 10 wherein the perfluorinated aliphatic group of said fluorinated monomer has 3 or 4 carbon atoms.

12. Method of treatment comprising contacting a substrate with an aqueous composition of claim 1.

13. Method according to claim 12 wherein said method further comprises drying the treated substrate at a temperature of not more than 40°C.

14. Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate is a fibrous substrate.

15. Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate is contacted with said aqueous composition by spraying, wiping, brushing or foaming the composition on the substrate.

16. Method according to claim 12 wherein said substrate comprises leather or textile.

17. Spray can comprising an aqueous composition of claim 1.